

Message Text

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SUBJ: MILITARY FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS: DISCUSSION WITH CARAMANLIS

1. EARLY THIS AFTERNOON AS I WAS CONCLUDING A PRIVATE MEETING
WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS ON ANOTHER SUBJECT,
I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE BILATERAL
MILITARY FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS, THE SECOND ROUND OF WHICH
BEGAN IN ATHENS THIS MORNING.

2. I TOLD CARAMANLIS THAT FROM REPORTS I HAD THE
GREEK DELEGATION TO THESE TALKS WAS OPERATING WITH VERY
SPECIFIC AND, THUS FAR AT LEAST, UNCOMPROMISING INSTRUCTIONS,
PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE AIR BASE AT HELLINIKON.
CARAMANLIS ASKED ME TO BE MORE SPECIFIC AND I TOLD HIM
THAT THE GREEK DELEGATION SEEMED TO BE INSISTING ON A
COMPLETE CLOSURE OF THAT AIR BASE AND ALL THE U.S.
FACILITIES THERE. I SAID THIS WOULD BE MOST
DIFFICULT FOR US, THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO GO A LONG WAY TO
TRY AND MEET GREEK REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THAT BASE,
BUT THAT WE FELT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE SOME KIND OF
ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD MEET BOTH HIS GOVERNMENT'S REQUIRE-
MENTS AND OUR OWN. FOR EXAMPLE, I SAID, THE U.S. DELEGATION
WOULD BE DISCUSSING THESE NEXT FEW DAYS VARIOUS MEANS OF
"HELLENIZING" THE BASE, BRINGING IT UNDER THE OVERALL
COMMAND OF A GREEK OFFICER, TAKING DOWN ENGLISH SIGNS,
REMOVING THE AMERICAN FLAG FROM THE ENTRANCE AND TERMINATING
SUCH NON-ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AS THE PX AND THE COMMISSARY.

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HOWEVER, I SAID, WE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO

INCORPORATE REMAINING ESSENTIAL FACILITIES INTO THE OVERALL
GREEK AIR BASE SITE AND UNDER OVERALL GREEK OFFICER
COMMAND, WITH AMERICAN OFFICERS DIRECTING SPECIAL
FACILITIES' OPERATIONS AS APPROPRIATE.

3. I TOLD CARAMANLIS THAT I WAS TAKING THIS UP WITH
HIM ON MY OWN INITIATIVE AND THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION
ON THE PART OF THE USG TO LINK THESE MILITARY FACILITIES
NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER SUBJECTS WE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING.
HOWEVER, I SAID, THERE WAS NO POINT IN KIDDING OURSELVES,
ALL OF THESE MATTERS AFFECTING US RELATIONS WITH GREECE,
WHETHER BILATERAL, IN THE NATO CONTEXT, OR MULTILATERAL,
HAD SOME DEGREE OF INTERRELATIONSHIP. CARAMANLIS DID NOT
SEEM TO HAVE ANY TROUBLE WITH THIS POINT AND INDICATED
HE ACCEPTED IT. HE SAID HE WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH
THE APPROPRIATE MINISTERS AND GREEK NEGOTIATORS SO THAT
HE PERSONALLY COULD GIVE THEM GUIDANCE ON THIS SUBJECT.
HE DID NOT SAY WHAT THE GUIDANCE WOULD BE BUT I GOT
THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD INSTRUCT THEM TO TRY AND
ACCOMMODATE OUR NEEDS AND REQUESTS IF HE FELT THEY WOULD
BE POLITICALLY PALATABLE IN GREECE.

4. LATER, AS I WAS LEAVING CARAMANLIS' OFFICE, I RAN
INTO DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF WITH WHOM I HAD DISCUSSED
THIS VERY SAME POINT LAST FRIDAY MORNING. AVEROFF AND
I WENT INTO A SIDE OFFICE AND DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT
FURTHER. AVEROFF SAID THAT ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT HE
AND CARAMANLIS FACED WAS THAT A WRITTEN REPORT HAD NOW BEEN
PREPARED BY GREEK TECHNICAL EXPERTS IN WHICH THEY ASSERTED
THAT NONE OF THE U.S. FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS AT THE
HELLENIKON AIR BASE "DIRECTLY" SERVED GREECE'S SECURITY.
AVEROFF AND I DISCUSSED THIS FOR A SHORT TIME AND HE
SAID THAT PERHAPS A RATIONALE COULD BE FOUND FOR SOME OF
THESE OPERATIONS "INDIRECTLY" SERVING GREECE'S SECURITY
AND THAT THEY COULD BE PRESERVED ON THAT BASIS. IN ANY
CASE, AVEROFF SAID HE WANTED TO ASSURE US THAT THE GREEK
GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE NO HASTY DECISIONS IN THIS AREA
BUT WOULD CONSIDER OUR PROPOSALS AND SUGGESTIONS AS CAREFULLY
AND SYMPATHETICALLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE REACHING A FINAL
DECISION.

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